

ATR Reimbursement FY 07 Summary

The AT Reimbursement Program continues to be a valuable resource in helping school districts off-set the cost of purchasing higher end assistive technology and systems for particular students.

Districts submitted applications on behalf of 175 students with assistive technology needs. Of the 49 districts that sought reimbursement, 94 students within 32 districts were funded. As in years past, applications submitted on behalf of students with visual or hearing impairments comprised nearly 75% of the applications received.

Applications by Disability Category

| Disability Category | Applications Received | | Applications Funded | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| Vision | 72 | 41% | 46 | 49% |
| Hearing | 56 | 32% | 17 | 18% |
| Speech/Language | 18 | 10% | 15 | 16% |
| Learning/Cognitive | 14 | 8% | 6 | 6% |
| Physical | 15 | 9% | 10 | 11% |
| Total | 175 | 100% | 94 | 100% |

Nearly half of the funded applications were on behalf of students with visual impairments. This, too, is in keeping with prior years. This population of students has very high assistive technology needs. It is not uncommon for them to have two, three and four different pieces of technology necessary to meet their day-to-day needs in the classroom.

A fairly even distribution among assistive technology categories is seen among the 146 devices obtained through the program this year. Augmentative communication and electronic enlarging comprise the first and second most purchased categories both in devices obtained and cost.

| AT Type | Pieces | Cost | Cost Percent |
|----------------------------|--------|------------|--------------|
| Augmentative Communication | 17 | 65,105.00 | 23% |
| Electronic Enlarging | 17 | 56,260.25 | 20% |
| Personal FM | 16 | 28,004.40 | 10% |
| Braille Embosser | 9 | 25,427.00 | 9% |
| Vision Hardware (other) | 15 | 24,533.00 | 8% |
| Electronic Notetaker | 6 | 21,155.00 | 7% |
| Screen Reader | 14 | 17,564.91 | 6% |
| Write Alternatives | 18 | 13,019.20 | 5% |
| Vision Software (other) | 12 | 12,370.00 | 4% |
| Learning/Attending | 6 | 8,469.14 | 3% |
| Soundfield FM | 7 | 8,035.64 | 3% |
| Screen Magnification | 7 | 6,848.86 | 2% |
| Tactile Graphic Embosser | 1 | 1,259.00 | >1% |
| Other | 1 | 399.00 | >1% |
| TOTAL | 146 | 288,450.40 | 100% |

The importance to students and schools of the AT Reimbursement program is best measured by looking at a situation faced within a district and how through AT Reimbursement they were able to reduce some of the barriers they and the student faced.

It is never easy to change schools, even less so when it occurs several months into the school year and you have a visual impairment. This difficult challenge, though, was exactly what Devonta faced when he transferred to the Francis Howell school district.

Aside from a simple sheet magnifier, Devonta arrived at Francis Howell with no assistive devices to aide in his transition. How quickly he would achieve both socially and academically within his new school was tied to the pace at which various supports, including assistive technology, were provided. Vision specialist's for the district promptly collaborated with Devonta and identified several different devices to help him compensate for his low vision.

An electronic enlarger (aka...CCTV) was deemed of primary importance for him to obtain. Such a device would provide access to print material, such as textbooks, and enable him to do written work. After further exploration, the vision specialists determined the Optelec Clearview Plus was the most appropriate device for Devonta. Financial assistance to purchase the device they obtained by submitting an application to the AT Reimbursement Program, who approved the application. With his new electronic enlarger, Devonta not only is better able to do his school work, but has also taken one more step toward going into business and as he put it, "making a \$100, 000 a year."